

# Medieval and Post Medieval Archaeology in the Mediterranean ~ an official interest group of the archaeological institute of america

## Minutes: Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting 2011

13 Thursday, Jan 2011

POSTED BY DAVID PETTEGREW IN MINUTES

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### Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology of Greece (MAPMAG) Interest Group

Archaeological Institute of America, Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX

January 7, 2011, 11:30-12:30

#### Attending

Ian Begg, Denver Graninger, Timothy Gregory, Mark Hammond, Sarah Lepinski, Anne McCabe, Amy Papalexandrou, David Pettegrew, Adam Rabinowitz, Deb Brown Stewart, Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory

#### I. Introduction

David Pettegrew welcomed members to the 2011 AIA IG business meeting, and gave regrets on behalf of the IG Chair, Amelia Brown, who was unable to attend the meetings this year. People briefly introduced themselves and their connection to medieval and post-medieval archaeology. Our attending members this year conduct research in Greece (Corinth, Karpathos, Kythera, Athens), Crimea, Bulgaria, and Cyprus.

#### II. Report on the Activities of the Group

David gave a brief overview of the group, explaining again our practical emphasis on the post-antique archaeology of Greece along with our broader intellectual interests in the wider post-antique Mediterranean.

David reviewed the six conference sessions run at the AIA, Byzantine Studies Conference, and Modern Greek Studies Association:

1. The Abandoned Countryside (2007)
2. Post-Antique Cyprus (2007)
3. Archaeology of *Xenitia*: Greek Immigration and Material Culture (2008)
4. City, Village, and Monastery: The Archaeology of Modern Greek Landscapes (2009)
5. First Out: Late Levels of Early Sites (2010)
6. Travel to Greece between Antiquity and the Grand Tour (2011).

In 2010, our abandonment session was published as a special issue in *The International Journal of Historical Archaeology*.

### III. MAPMAG Sessions for 2011-2012

Our first order of business was to select a colloquium topic for AIA 2012 in Philadelphia. David reviewed ideas proposed during previous sessions of the IG business meeting that had not yet been implemented.

1. Teaching the History of the Post-Classical World
2. Archaeology of National Identity in Greece
3. The Comparative Archaeology of Monasticism
4. The Peripheries of the Post-Classical Greek / Byzantine world

David added to the table an idea proposed by Bill Caraher and Kostis Kourelis, who are editing a book called *Beyond Icons: Theory and Methods in Byzantine Archaeology*, a work designed to provide a state of the field summary of the diverse methods and theoretical approaches used by Byzantine archaeologists today. Running sessions at either the AIA, BSC, or both would allow the different contributing authors to present their ideas as part of the process of creating content for the work.

Then our discussion began. Adam Rabinowitz, who had chaired the East Europe / Eurasian Interest Group Meeting earlier that morning, recommended a co-sponsored session between the East Europe group and MAPMAG on the topic "Peripheries of the Post-Classical World" (#4 above). The colloquium would not only make use of the energies of both groups but would publicize the post-antique period.

Attending members were very supportive of this idea as a way of broadening the scope of the group and our interactions with scholars beyond our area. The idea nicely complements our session this year (Travel to Greece between Antiquity and the Grand Tour) by turning to connections to other places.

Members discussed who might contribute papers. Adam noted that he and Michelle Hobart would organize it. Denver said that he would try to find a good contributor from Bulgaria. Others were excited by the possibility of adopting a very broad definition of "periphery" involving scholars who work in Russia, Egypt, the Black Sea, the Near East, and the western Mediterranean.

One critical issue that was raised in the discussion was how to fund the travel of international scholars. Tim recommended Kress Foundation, Deb suggested Dumbarton Oaks, and Denver suggested the American Research Center in Sofia. The AIA also offers some funding for non-resident presenters. David added that since the colloquium can run with as few as 4 papers and as many as 7 or 8, we could move forward with aiming for a large session which could continue if funding problems prevented our international contributors from visiting the US. The AIA submission process requires revised submission anyway in August, which allows the organizers to make some changes to the program.

Chronologically, the colloquium would cover the period of Late Antiquity through the Byzantine period at least. Adam will work with Michelle Hobart to develop the central concept of the session, perhaps networks, communications, or connectivity. Since the deadline for submission is in March, MAPMAG group members should submit the names of potential contributors to Adam as soon as possible.

The attendees decided to move forward with the Peripheries idea, but there was also real support for the proposal made by Kostis and Bill on the *Beyond Icons* volume. If Bill or Kostis were interested in moving forward with their idea, we could look into sponsoring two sessions (or more precisely, 1-1/2 given the co-sponsorship of the peripheries colloquium idea with the East Europe group). Or, we could run the Beyond Icons session at the Byzantine Studies conference in 2011, and / or the AIA in January 2012.

#### **IV. Blog, Website, and Collaboration with Byzantine Studies Association of North America Project**

The second main issue on the agenda was promoting the visibility of the group and its goals beyond the AIA through the internet, an idea considered also at the IG meeting in 2010. The basic question that we raised is how to expand the work and mission of the group. How could we reach out to a broader public?

David began with a review of the blog/website called Pendentive (<https://pendentive.wordpress.com/>), a successor to SQUINCH (2007-2009). While we have made few updates to Pendentive over the course of the last year, we have regularly had over 100 page views / month, suggesting that people are finding and using the site.

David summarized a message from webmaster Bill Caraher about the site. Besides apologizing for not keeping the page updated, Bill raised a series of questions for the group to discuss:

1. Should we develop the site beyond an occasionally updated blog?
2. Should we partner with the Byzantine Studies Association of North America in their new website devoted to Byzantine Archaeology
3. What content should we add?
4. What help can members give?

Amy Papalexandrou discussed #2, the new web endeavor for the BSANA website, which will entail the creation of a separate site devoted entirely to Byzantine Archaeology. Amy, Kostis, and Bill are all involved in this endeavor. If MAPMAG agreed to move our content and blog to the site, we would have a separate space on the page for our activities.

Our subsequent discussion centered on the purpose of the site. Adam noted, for example, that his primary use of websites is to visit occasionally to find specific information, and he wondered whether most other users do the same. Would the site be used primarily for internal communication between group members (a good idea, but one that never works in practice), or external communication to visitors. Or would it be a blog? Deb noted that the static nature of traditional websites and recommended the use of more dynamic media like Facebook for communication. David highlighted the value of linking websites with Facebook so that members stay up to date. Anne recommended sending our updates and news to the Byzantine Studies listserv (and others) to publicize the activities of the group.

The attending members in the end supported both the development of the site / blog, and partnering with BSANA on this, but recommended better communication all around. Tim raised the question of whether we are communicating with one another enough during the year apart from our meetings. The group agreed that while it was useful to have a number of contributors to keep the group informed, it would also be good to put someone in charge, a kind of "communication officer" for keeping the group informed. David said that he would follow through with ensuring that someone be put in charge. Given the frequent use of Facebook, it might be valuable to start a Facebook group with an RSS feed to a new blog.

As for content (#3), Deb expressed concern that the MAPMAG website include content related to post-medieval periods like Ottoman and modern. Other members recommended using the website to post announcements, podcasts, and minutes, RSS Feeds to other blogs in Byzantine studies, images related to Byzantine archaeology, educational pages, and data related to archaeological sites.

The meeting ended at 12:45 PM.

Minutes submitted January 13, 2011, by David K. Pettegrew.

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